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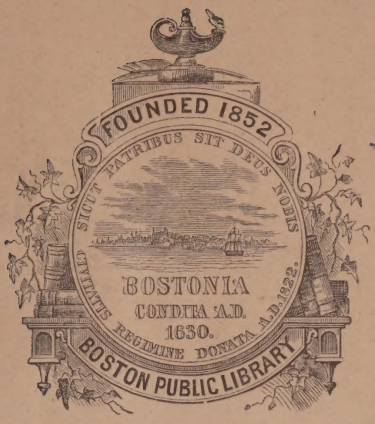

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From the Colonization Journal, August, 1861.

75-85: 151

HOPE FOR AFRICA:

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SEVENTH AVENUE, NEW-YORK, JULY 21, 1861.

BY REV. EDWARD W. BLYDEN,

PRINCIPAL OF THE ALEXANDER HIGH SCHOOL, MONROVIA, LIBERIA.

"Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God."—PSALM lxviii. 31.

THE continent of Africa occupies an important geographical position. It lies between two great oceans—the highways of the principal portions of commerce. It contains twelve millions of square miles, with a population of one hundred and sixty millions. But, notwithstanding its physical and relative importance, it has lain, until a comparatively recent period, shrouded from the view of the inhabitants of other portions of the earth.

While the spirit of adventure has opened up the most uninviting parts of Europe; while Asia, with its impenetrable jungle and ferocious animals, has been traversed from one end to the other; while the ancient and mighty forests of America have fallen before the power of enterprise and the charm of civilization—the highest peak of the Rocky Mountains scaled, the Andes and the Cordilleras measured; while the distant isles of the sea have been visited and occupied by intelligence, industry, and enterprise; while the cold and barren, and almost inaccessible regions of the earth have been approached and explored as far as human beings are found—Africa, lying in the very pathway of commerce, offering as many inducements to the seekers after scientific knowledge as any other land, presenting as numerous objects for the labors of the philanthropist as any other country, has been passed by by the traveler and the philanthropist, and the civilized world has been left to entertain at best but the most vague and unsatisfactory conjectures as to the character of the country, and the condition of its inhabitants.

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To the majority of civilized and enlightened men, Africa is hardly ever made a subject of earnest thought. Various interests of more immediate concern crowd out thoughts of a land which is spoken of, perhaps, only when instances of degradation, ignorance, and superstition are referred to. The other portion of the civilized world, who think and speak of Africa, are divided in their views and feelings with regard to that land, and in the motives which actuate them to be at all interested. Some regard it as a place with which a lucrative trade may be "driven;" where the articles of commerce, palm-oil, cam-wood, ivory, and other rare productions may be obtained. These speak of Africa only in connection with these things. All their interests in the land are of a commercial nature. Others, with souls more sordid and hearts more avaricious, who are never once troubled by any sentiment of humanity, are interested in Africa only as a scene for plunder and carnage. From these, Africa has had the most frequent and the most constant visits, during the last three centuries. They have spread all along the coast of that peninsula—formerly the abode of peace and plenty, of industry and love—"arrows, firebrands, and death." In their pursuit of blood—"not beasts', but human gore"—they have scattered desolation, and misery, and degradation into all parts of the land whither they have had access; so that not unfrequently has it occurred that some unfortunate and lonely sufferer, standing amid a scene of desolation, having escaped the cruel chase of the slaver, whose ruthless hands have borne away his relatives and acquaintances, has earnestly cursed civilization, and has solemnly prayed, as he has stood surveying the melancholy relics of his home, that an insurmountable and impenetrable barrier—some wall of mountain height—might be erected, between his country and all civilized nations.

Only a few, very few, have regarded Africa as a land inhabited by human beings, children of the same common Father, travelers to the same judgment-seat of Christ, and heirs of the same awful immortality. These few have endeavored to hold up that land as the object of the sympathy, the labors, and the prayers of the Christian world. They have held her up as the victim of unfortunate circumstances, which have operated against her progress, and prevented her from keeping pace, in the march of human improvement, with other and more favored portions of the earth. These few have endeavored, and are now endeavoring to awaken a deeper interest in that land.

Through their noble efforts, that forgotten country is becoming better known. Its inhabitants are receiving more of the sympathy of the enlightened portion of mankind; and efforts are making to introduce among them the blessings of civilization and Christianity—to accelerate the day when "Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God."

But there are adversaries. There are those who have no sympathy to bestow upon the African. His complexion and hair furnish to them conclusive reasons why he should be excluded from their benevolence. They wish nothing to do with him. Their charities, when the negro is mentioned, immediately contract. Their Christian love is ample enough to embrace all Europe, and other countries inhabited by the Caucasian, but it can go no further. Upon other branches of the human family they look down with arrogance and contempt. And such persons may be found in enlightened countries, professing Christianity, and priding themselves on their civilization and culture. But do not such feelings prove them to be connected rather closely with those remote ages when the extent of one's clan or tribe or district formed the limit of all his benevolent operations? Does not their conduct constantly remind those who meet them of their intimate relations with the barbarous past? Are they not sadly deficient of that magnanimous and noble liberality which Christianity seeks to inspire, when it declares that of "one blood God hath made *all the nations* of the earth?"

There are others, who believe, or affect to believe, that the people are doomed to degradation and servitude; that the malediction uttered by Noah—evidently against the descendants of Canaan, and which has long since received its fulfillment—follows the African race; and that, therefore, all efforts to elevate them will be unavailing. Yet some of these persons profess to believe in the regenerating and elevating power of the Gospel. They will declaim long and loudly, upon the efficiency of Christianity to redeem and dignify man—to spread, wherever he goes, light and liberty, and the blessings of an exalted civilization. But, in their minds, Africa seems to form an exception. The promises in the Bible of the universal prevalence of righteousness and truth, are not far-reaching enough to affect her case. The ignorance, degradation, and misery of the land are so deep and revolting, as to baffle the recuperative power of the Gospel.

But the Lord, whose ways are not as our ways, and whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, has declared that the earth shall be filled with his knowledge, as the waters cover the sea. Glorious truth! The salvation which Christ has purchased for us is a "common salvation." It is confined neither to countries nor races. It knows no limits. All complexions, all classes and conditions are equally within the sphere of its operation. "Go ye into all the world," said the Divine Author of the salvation, "and preach the Gospel to *every* creature." Its applicability is universal. All the accessible dominions of the world may be blessed by it. It will rectify all disorder, banish every vice, loose every bond, and, having eradicated the causes of all the sins and sorrows and sufferings of the human family, it will spread righteousness and truth, harmony and peace, liberty and love, over the whole face of this sin-stricken globe. These are the glorious and wide-spread results which Christianity promises to achieve. And who will dare to say that Africa will not participate in these general blessings? Who will dare to affirm that Africa will remain in her gloom, when the glory of the Lord shall have filled the whole earth?

But if these promises be considered too general, there are passages in the word of God, there are promises and types which have special reference to Africa. "Behold Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. The labor of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine." And the words of the text: "Princes shall come out of Egypt. Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." No one that remembers the reference in the Scripture to the skin of the Ethiopian, will doubt that these prophecies belong to the negro. We see the eunuch of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, going on his way rejoicing, because believing in Jesus; and we seem to have a pledge of Africa's evangelization. When the wicked Herod was plotting the murder of the infinite Redeemer of mankind, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, and said: "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into the land of Egypt"—*into the land of Egypt*, IN AFRICA.* Africa, in the providence of God, according to the declarations of prophecy, was the land chosen to shelter the Saviour of the world. If, in the hour of his danger, Africa was the chosen asylum from the cruelty of

his royal enemy ; if, in the hour of his affliction, he sought a refuge in that land, will he not now, in the day of *her* trial and *her* affliction, remember her ? Was not his flight to, and sojourn in that land, a token of his favor ? Driven from Asia, the land of his birth, from among his own people, that land, now down-trodden, gave him welcome. And if it be true that to as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God, may not Africa, though she did not then receive him in that higher and more spiritual sense, expect to share in the privilege of becoming a child of God ? Will he not yet, in his might, as King of kings, and Lord of lords, gird on his sword, and ride through that land, conquering and to conquer ? Will he not overturn, as he is already beginning to do, and overturn and overturn, until he establish his kingdom there ? Yes ; we take it, that as he suffered in Africa in the days of his humiliation, he will yet reign in that land in his glory.

But there is an ampler prophecy still—a more express type : "Let us go," to quote the language of Mr. Melvill, "and look on the Redeemer as he toils towards Calvary. Who is it that, in the ordering of Providence, has been appointed to carry his cross ? A Cyrenian, an African. As Africa had something to do with his earlier days, so she has to do with his final hours. 'And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name : him they compelled to bear his cross.' We read the prophecy ; we apprehend the type. Not without meaning was one of the sons of Africa selected to bear the cross after Christ, and thus to fill a post to which the martyrs and confessors of every age of Christianity have counted it their highest honor to succeed. It was as though to tell us that even Africa shall yet be brought to the discipleship of Jesus. Europe gave not this type of the Gentile world submitting to Christ. Asia was not permitted to own the favored individual. America, as yet unknown to the rest of the earth, might not send the representative of heathenism. Africa is the privileged country ; an African follows Jesus. Oh ! the darkness of many generations seem scattered ; and I rejoice in the assurance that the land of slaves shall be the home of freedom, the land of misery the home of happiness, the land of idolatry the home of Christianity." *

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* Melvill's Sermons, Vol II. 1850.

Some have been inclined to regard Africa as a doomed land, on account of the protracted night which has hung over it. Empires have arisen and fallen ; the arts and sciences have been born in other lands, have been fostered and grown up to strength and maturity, while Africa remains in its primitive simplicity and barbarism, contributing nothing to the well-being of mankind. From this fact, it has been argued that there is a natural and invincible incapacity for improvement in the race, forbidding all hope of their ever becoming a power in the world. This were a correct inference, if it could be shown that Africans have had equal facilities for improvement with those races which have made such rapid strides in civilization, or if it could be shown that any people precisely in their circumstances have made any marked advancement. The negro has been inhabiting a country by whose physical peculiarities he has been deprived of the intercourse of the civilized and enlightened world.

This land, for wise purposes doubtless, is rendered inaccessible to foreigners, by fevers produced by the exhalations arising from the marshy alluvial lands, which border all the intertropical regions ; it has, therefore, been shut out, for the most part, from the means of improvement. Men talk selfishly and scornfully of the long-continued barbarism and degradation of Africa, as if civilization were indigenous to any country ; as if the soil and climate of some countries could give existence, and vitality, and growth to the arts and sciences. If this were the case, we should despair of Africa's ever rising from her abject condition. But all the teachings of general and particular history, all individual and national experience are opposed to such an idea. No nation has ever been found, which, by its own unaided efforts, by some powerful inward impulse, has arisen from barbarism and degradation to civilization and respectability. It is very true that the circumstances of some nations or communities have been more favorable than those of others, for receiving and retaining and improving upon the elements of civilization. But there is nothing in race or blood, in color or hair, that imparts susceptibility of improvement to one people over another. Knowledge, which lies at the basis of all human progress, came from heaven. It must be acquired ; it is not innate. The mind left to itself from infancy, without the means of culture, remains, if not blank, yet destitute of all those ideas which constitute a man civilized. If it be strong and vigorous, it will, instead of rising in the scale of

virtue and civilization, make deeper and more awful plunges into barbarism. The richness of the uncultivated soil shows itself in the rankness and luxuriance of the weeds which it produces. The soil, then, must be cultivated, if we expect to reap a harvest of any value. So with the mind. The intellectual plough and rake must be used, and the good seed introduced. Knowledge must be imparted. As one man learns it from another, so nation learns it from nation. Civilization is handed from one people to another, its great fountain and source being the great God of the universe.

Those nations that are foremost in civilization and science were once in abject degradation. No one in the days of Cæsar or Tacitus could ever have predicted that the barbarism and savage wildness of the Germans would give place to the learning, refinement, and culture which the people now exhibit. When Cicero pronounced the Britons unfit for slaves, who would have ventured to affirm, without appearing to insult the understanding of men, that that people would become one of the leading powers of the earth? "Nothing," says Mr. Macaulay, "in the early existence of Britain, indicated the greatness which she was destined to attain." Now, I would ask, if it be true that there is innate ability in certain races to rise in the scale of civilization; and if that ability, as some would intimate, exists in those which have already risen, why did the Britons, when Greece and Rome flourished in all their grandeur, remain insignificant and unknown? Why was not that self-civilizing power exhibited by them, which many now look for in the Africans? Nor are Africans the only people that have remained stationary in these latter days of multiplied facilities for improvement. There are many tribes in whose veins courses the renowned Caucasian blood, sunk to-day in a degradation as deep, and in an ignorance as profound as any tribe in Africa. If civilization is inborn in the Caucasian, as some affirm; if it is indigenous to all the countries which he inhabits, why are the tribes to which we have referred, no further advanced? Ought not every land which Caucasians inhabit, to be in a high state of civilization? But many are far from such a state. Look at the regions of Siberia, of Lapland. Look at the peasantry of many of the countries of Europe. Why are they so far down in the scale of civilization? And look at those countries in the south of Europe, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, which formerly flourished, and contained within themselves all the learning and wisdom that existed in the world.

They have sadly degenerated. They are comparatively insignificant. Why did not their Caucasian nature, if it did not urge them onward to higher attainments, keep them in the same leading positions among the nations? The answer is at hand. Their natures remain the same. Their soil and climate are the same. Demosthenes and Cicero, Alexander and Cæsar, saw no serener sky, they felt no more genial breezes than their degenerate posterity. The sun shines with the same power and glory; the moon moves on with the same soft and silvery sweetness; the stars are as beautiful and bright as when Homer and Virgil felt their inspiration. What, then, causes the difference? *The moral circumstances of the people are changed.* The circumstances that have surrounded them for several centuries have been of a character to retard their progress.

Men are, to a great extent, the creatures of the circumstances in which they live. Very often, what they achieve depends less upon their personal qualities than upon surrounding influences. The African forms no exception to this rule. Between him and other men there is not that difference which some have labored to establish. There is, indeed, no essential difference between any two men. Men, however, have drawn formidable lines of separation between themselves and others, who, happening not to have been blessed with the same propitious circumstances, have not risen to the same intellectual or social standing. How true the words of the poet!—

> "Alas! what differs more than man from man?
> And whence this difference? Whence but from himself?
> For see the universal race endowed
> With the same upright form."*

The African, then, is in the rear of the European, not because of any essential difference existing in their nature, but only on account of differing circumstances. In consequence of various influences to which I have already adverted, rendering the coast of his native land unhealthy to foreigners, civilization and Christianity, with their concomitant blessings, have not been generally introduced.

Until very recently, the country was not known beyond its maritime frontiers. And in keeping with the general disposition to exaggerate the good or evil qualities of what is unknown, various stories were put in circulation with regard to this land—which had the effect to beget indifference on the part of some, and actual dread of penetrating the country on the part of

*Wordsworth.

others. Some of these stories of wonders in the interior, and frightful appearances on the coast, arose in remote antiquity, and are to this day current among the ignorant. Recent explorations show that many of those horrible things had no reality but in the prejudices of their inventors. Perhaps the most ancient and most amusing stories told of this land, are those by Hanno, the Carthaginian commander, who went on a voyage of colonization and discovery along the Atlantic coast, about five hundred years before the Christian era. He says in his report: "We passed a country burning with fires and perfumes, and streams of fires supplied from it fell into the sea. The country was impassable on account of the heat. We sailed quickly thence, being much terrified; and, passing on for four days, we discovered at night a country full of fire. In the middle was a lofty fire larger than the rest, which seemed to touch the stars." This surpasses even those terrible pictures which children, in their florid imaginations, are accustomed to draw of that land.

All these stories of the physical character of the country, blended with exaggerated statements of the moral degradation of its inhabitants, have tended to keep away enterprise and civilization from Africa. Men have been willing barely to tolerate a trade with the outskirts of the country; and they would not even do this, were it not for the lucrativeness of the trade. And it has been the policy of African traders, though they know that many of the tales in circulation about Africa are devoid of foundation, to assist in giving them currency, in order to keep away competition. Can any wonder, in view of these circumstances, that Africa still lags behind in the march of human improvement?

And when, with these things, we take into consideration the regular and thoroughly organized efforts which have been put forth to keep back the African; when we think of the numerous obstacles which have been thrown into the way of his advancement by the avarice and wickedness of men, do we not rather wonder that he is no lower down in barbarism? Do we not rather wonder that any portion of this people should have made progress in civilization, in literature, and in science?

Shall we here tell you of the sufferings which the slave-trade has entailed upon them? Shall we tell you of their sorrows in the countries of their captivity? Oh! we would not harrow up the feelings of this audience with tales of woe. We would but refer to slavery and the slave-trade. Those names alone are suf-

ficient to call up emotions of sympathy wherever there exist the feelings of humanity. The wrongs of the African fill the darkest page of human history. To recount the barbarities which the Christian nations of Europe and of America have inflicted, and are now inflicting upon the negro, "would fill volumes, and they should be written with tears instead of ink, and on sackcloth instead of parchment." We refer not merely to those physical annoyances, and diabolical tortures, and debasing usages, to which, in the countries of their exile, they have been subjected, but also to those deeper wrongs whose tendency has been to dwarf the soul, to emasculate the mind. You have, perhaps, read the narrative of African sufferings; but painfully intense as they are, they are only the outside—they are only the visible. There are a thousand little evils which can never be expressed. There is a sorrow of the heart, with which the stranger cannot intermeddle. There are secret agonies known only to God, which are far more acute than any external tortures. Oh! it is not the smiting of the back, until the earth is crimsoned with streams of blood; it is not the pursuing of human beings with blood-hounds; it is not the amputation of the limbs; it is not even the killing of the body; it is not these that are the keenest sufferings that a people can undergo. Oh! no; these affect only the outward man, and may leave untouched the majestic mind. But those inflictions which tend to contract and destroy the mind; those cruelties which benumb the sensibility of the soul, those influences which chill and arrest the currency of the heart's affections—these are the awful instruments of real suffering and degradation; and these have been made to operate upon the African.

But mark the providence of God in the case of this people The very means which, to all human appearance, seemed calculated to crush them out from the earth, have been converted into means of blessing. In the countries of their exile, they have come under the influences of Christianity, from which they were debarred in their own country, by physical circumstances. They have been almost miraculously preserved. It may be said of them as of the Israelites in Egypt, "The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." They have grown despite affliction, both numerically and intellectually; their national life has been remarkably intense; they still retain in undiminished vigor their integrity as a people.

And, as if in fulfillment of a Divine plan, some are beginning to

return to their fatherland from the house of their bitter pilgrimage, laden with the blessings of Christianity and civilization, and are successfully introducing them among their benighted brethren. Liberia, the region of Africa which these pioneers inhabit, insignificant though it may be among the nations of the earth, is an important spot on that continent. It is a centre whence is beginning to radiate to different points of that land the light of Christianity. There are fifteen thousand civilized and Christianized Africans striving to accomplish the twofold work of establishing and maintaining an independent nationality, and of introducing the Gospel among untold millions of unevangelized and barbarous men. Their residence on that coast of only thirty years has already brought to pass important and salutary revolutions in the condition of that portion of Africa.

Liberia has resisted the influence of heathenism. She has stood her ground against the encroachments of a superstition, which, considering the general character of her citizens, she was but little prepared to meet. She has completely, in all her feebleness, annihilated the slave-trade along seven hundred miles of coast. Before the establishment of that little Republic, the tribes in all the extent of country now within our jurisdiction, and under our influence, were perpetually harassed by the incursions of those monsters in human form, the slave-traders. They could feel secure at no time. War! war! war! and carnage were continually the cry, and every nook and corner were made to tremble. Young and old, male and female fell victims to the heartless marauders. Those who escaped did so only by fleeing from the neighborhood of the slave-hunters to the thickets and swamps—to the milder and safer neighborhood of leopards and boa constrictors. But, blessed be God, a different state of things now exists.

When, forty years ago, the small band of eighty colored persons settled on Cape Mesurado, far away, near five thousand miles across the sea, from the place of their birth, in a strange and insalubrious climate, surrounded by hostile tribes and other unpropitious influences, owning only a few acres of land, no one would have supposed that in less than forty years, in the lifetime of some of the first settlers, that people would so enlarge and spread themselves, so extend their influences, as to possess over 50,000 square miles of territory, holding under their jurisdiction over two hundred thousand souls. Tribes which, when they first landed on those shores, could easily have overwhelmed

them and swept them into the sea, they now compel to cease intercourse with the slave-trader, to forget their mutual feuds in obedience to Christian law, and to cease from wars and bloodshed. They induce them, instead of the sword, to use the ploughshare, and instead of the spear, the pruning-hook. And this influence is growing. Liberia is known and respected for hundreds of miles in the interior; and by the contact which is every day occurring between traders and transient visitors from the far interior, and the civilized Liberians, our influence is going out in all directions, and a great work is being accomplished in this part of Africa.

But you may ask for positive advancement in the Republic of Liberia. You may point me to the progress of this country. You may point me to the physical revolutions which Anglo-Saxon genius has produced over all this land. You may bid me look at the various appliances of civilization, and you may ask, Can Liberia show any thing like these?

In reply, I might point you to numerous physical changes in Liberia. I might point you to numerous instances of decided improvement in the physical aspect of that portion of Africa. But I now choose to refer you to the moral work that has been accomplished. I point you to barbarism encroached upon and overcome; to carnage and bloodshed arrested; to peace produced among belligerents; to confidence and security, comfort and happiness restored; to lawful traffic taking the place of unlawful; and I ask whether the triumphs of love over hatred, the triumphs of peace over war; the triumphs of humanity over barbarism and outrage; the triumphs of Christianity over heathenism, be not entitled to at least as much respect as the triumph of physical agencies over the face of nature? I do not know of any other place in the world, where fifteen thousand persons are doing so important a work as those fifteen thousand Liberians. O that they may have the wisdom to comprehend the responsibility of their position, and the grace to discharge the duties it involves!

The land is gradually opening. The portals which have been kept closed through all the historic ages by the repulsive inhospitality of nature, are yielding to the enterprise, the greed of trade, and the missionary zeal of the nineteenth century. Barth in the east and north, Livingstone in the south, have brought before the world treasures of information with regard to

that land. Seymour and Sims,* citizens of Liberia, on the west have rendered valuable service. Explorations in various sections of the country are now going on. From almost every point of the compass, expeditions are proceeding to the interior of the continent. Soon the mysteries of the land will be unfolded to the gaze and contemplation of an astonished world. These are the preliminaries to that great event which is predicted in the text, "Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hands unto God."

We have endeavored carefully to examine this glorious and oft-cited passage in the original Hebrew; and it has occurred to us that the passage might have been literally rendered, "Ethiopia shall *suddenly* stretch out her hands unto God." The idea contained in the verb *taritz*, rendered, "*shall soon stretch out*," does not seem to refer so much to the *time* as to the *manner* of the action predicted. The first meaning of the verb is *to run*; so it is rendered in Psalm cxix. 32: "I will *run* in the way of thy commandments;" and in Jeremiah xxiii. 31: "I have not sent these prophets, yet they *ran*," etc. In the Hiphil form, the form which occurs in the text, the verb means to *cause to run*; or to lead on hastily, to do a thing quickly before the occurrence of any obstacle; hence, *suddenly*. Gesenius, the distinguished German philologist, translates the passage, "Ethiopia shall let her hands make haste to God."

If, then, the idea is, that Ethiopia shall *suddenly* be redeemed, is there not furnished a rebuke to those who, because Africa has lain so long in darkness and gloom, and because of the unpromising aspect of her present moral condition, give themselves up to despair, and fancy that there will never be the inauguration of better times? Why should men at any time venture unqualified opinions on matters in which the intellectual vision is necessarily bounded, and with regard to which experience so abundantly shows they cannot arrive at conclusions altogether free from error, however extensive the induction upon which they base their reasonings? The problem of African disenthralment and elevation is beyond the power of human ingenuity to solve. Nothing short of Omniscience could so lay down the premises for reasoning upon this important subject, as to secure a result entirely free from error. Can the most acute and far-reaching

* The last two are names but little known, but not undeserving of mention, if adventure, and endurance, and suffering for the sake of enlarging the sphere of human knowledge, entitle any to be numbered among the benefactors of mankind.

mind vindicate the antecedents and concomitants of that remarkable period when a nation shall be born in a day? We may now be upon the very eve of events which are to usher in the redemption of Africa. The time, yea, the set time to favor Africa, may be just about to break upon us in all its glory. And it may be that centuries form the interval which lies between us and the desired consummation. We cannot tell; though from the signs of the times, we feel justified in taking a hopeful rather than a desponding view.

The success which has already attended the efforts to civilize and Christianize that dark land gives encouraging promise of a glorious future.

"Within the last twenty-five years more than one hundred Christian churches have been organized in that country, and upwards of fifteen thousand hopeful converts have been gathered into those churches. Nearly two hundred schools are in full operation in connection with these various missions, and not less than sixteen thousand native youths are receiving a Christian training in those schools at the present moment. More than twenty different dialects have been studied out and reduced to writing, into many of which large portions of sacred Scripture, as well as other religious books, have been translated, printed, and circulated among the people; and we are, no doubt, in the bounds of truth and probability, when it is assumed that some knowledge of the Christian salvation has been brought by direct and indirect means within the reach of at least five millions of immortal beings, who had never before heard of the blessed name of the Saviour.

"Bright Christian lights now begin to blaze up at intervals, along a line of sea-coast of more than three thousand miles, where unbroken night formerly reigned. The everlasting Gospel is now preached in Kumasi and Abomi, the capitals respectively of Ashantee and Dahomey, two of the most barbarous kingdoms on the face of the earth. Christian missions are now being established all over the kingdom of Yoruba, a land once wholly given up to the slave-trade and bloodshed. Along the banks of the far interior Niger, where the bones of the great African traveler have slumbered for half a century, Christian lights are springing up in the track of the exploring expedition. At Old Calabar, a place renowned in former times, not only for being one of the chief seats of the foreign slave-trade, but for the unparalleled cruelties and barbarities of its people,

the Gospel is not only preached, but the Spirit of God is poured out upon that debased people. The Gospel has recently been proclaimed by our own (Presbyterian) missionaries from Corisco, on the heights of the Sierra del Crystal Mountains, to a people who had not only never before heard it, but who themselves were unknown to the Christian world until within a few years past. When all these things are taken into consideration, every discerning mind must see at once, that a footing of immense advantage has already been acquired; and if present measures, with such modifications as may be suggested by experience, are followed up, in dependence upon Divine aid, the time is not far distant when the light of the Gospel shall reach the darkest and most remote corner of that great continent."*

There is a strong probability that the progress of truth in Africa will be rapid and sudden. The missionary does not encounter there, as in Asia, any formidable superstition to be battered down. Though the people acknowledge the existence of good and bad spirits, they have no system of religion protected by the sanction of a hoary antiquity; so that the work of evangelization need not be commenced by the slow process of undermining ancient and venerable systems of belief. The missionary's hardest work is to check the downward currency of the affections, to beget thoughtfulness on the subject of religion, to instill ideas of religion into the mind. His work is more constructive than destructive. He has nothing to demolish; he has only to arrange his materials, and proceed to build.

We look for great things in Africa during the next five-and-twenty years. Why should it be thought a thing impossible for that moral desert to bloom and blossom as the rose? Why should it be regarded as impossible for the moral night which has so long rested upon that land, to give place to a glorious day? If the Lord has declared that Ethiopia shall *suddenly* stretch forth her hands unto God, why should we be inclined to limit him in his power? Is there any thing too hard for the Lord? If he be Almighty, if he can create at all, if he can bring a single atom of matter from the abyss of nothingness, into existence, then what can he not do? He only speaks, and it is done; he commands, and it stands fast; he spake, and the confusion of chaos was hushed, and the world—the beautiful cosmos—came forth with all its symmetry and grandeur. Then, why should there be any thing impossible in the doctrine that

* Princeton Review, July, 1858.

Ethiopia—benighted and outraged Ethiopia—shall *suddenly* stretch out her hands unto God? Why should it be thought impossible for him to bring order out of the moral and intellectual chaos of that land?

If the men who are skeptical as to the rapid evangelization and civilization of Africa, could only catch the hum of the missionary schools scattered in various portions of that land; could they only hear the earnest appeals of leading men among various tribes for Christianity and its teachings; could they hear, as we hear, who live on that barbarous coast, the murmurings of the fountains of the great deep of ignorance and superstition, which are breaking up all around us; could they hear the noise, which we hear, of the rattling of dry bones strewed over that immense valley, they would cease to doubt; they would recognize, as we do, the promising future before us; they would see that a day of life and joy is rapidly dawning upon Africa, and that there is a strong probability that He whose right it is to reign will suddenly come and take possession of that land. It need not imply any pretension to prophetic insight, for us to declare that we live in the shadows of remarkakle events in the history of Africa—events whose consequences will be of transcendent importance and unending interest, not only to that down-trodden land, but to the whole human race. O that the Christian Church throughout the world be fervent in prayer, and diligent in labor, that the day may be hastened when "Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God!"

Have the black men of the United States no part to take in this work? There lies the land of your fathers, in its natural beauty and glory—a country well-watered everywhere as the garden of the Lord—a country of hills and valleys, of rivers and brooks, of fields and plains.

> "Every prospect pleases,
> And only man is vile."

There it lies also in its spiritual desolation—millions of your brethren in the most awful destitution. Have you, O ye children of Africa, no tear to shed, no sympathy to bestow, no effort to put forth for your gray-haired parents in sorrow and affliction; for your brethren who have not, as you have, enjoyed the blessings of civilization and Christianity? Are you ashamed of Africa, because she has been plundered and rifled by wicked men? Do you turn your backs upon your mother, because she is not high among the nations? Are you neglecting her, with

the hope of elevating yourselves in this country? Oh! remember that Europeans cannot carry on the work so much needed in that land, and which experience proves that you are so well fitted to achieve. This all-important work is yours. White men go there; they wither and die. You were brought away by the permission of Providence, doubtless, that you might be prepared and fitted to return and instruct your brethren. If you turn away from the work to which Providence evidently calls you, with the selfish hope of elevating yourselves in this country, beware lest the calamities come upon you which are threatened to those who neglect to honor their parents. I give it as my most serious conviction, that there will be no real prosperity among the Africans in this land, no proper respect shown them by the dominant race, so long as they persist, as a mass, in ignoring the claims of Africa upon them. All their efforts at self-elevation here which shall leave Africa out of the question, will be as "sowing to the wind."

It is gratifying to find, however, that there has been, during the last few years, a decided change for the better in the feelings of many towards Africa. Formerly, those who rose up among the colored people of this country to plead for African civilization by her own descendants, were denounced as traitors, and were often in danger of being stoned as enemies to the peace and prosperity of their brethren. But now some of the leading men among you are taking large views of duty, and no longer consider it a mark of weakness to plead for the evangelization of millions of souls by their brethren in this land. They no longer consider it disgraceful to urge colored men of intelligence and enterprise to turn their attention to Africa.

It has pleased Almighty God, in late years, as I have endeavored to show, to make interesting openings for the introduction of the Gospel into that land. Scores of doors which, a few years ago, were strongly bolted, are now, by the Divine agency, thrown open before the Church. Broad entrances are proffered the Gospel of Christ. Will not black men who have so freely received, hasten to give the waters of life to the perishing millions? A call is to-day made upon you from your benighted brethren. Are you prepared to spurn it? Have you no response for this Macedonian call? I entreat you, by all the blessings you *have* enjoyed, by all the blessings you now enjoy, by all the blessings you hope to enjoy, remember Africa. I beseech you by the dire necessities of our people; by their long night of sorrow and

suffering; by the cries louder than thunder, that are wafted from the far interior, upon every wind that blows; by the encouraging prospects before us; by all the promises of God—men and brethren, come over and help us—help "Ethiopia to stretch forth her hands unto God."